



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1459  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/706,659	11/12/2003	Joseph L. Witzlum	00015-007003/SD2000-045	3280
26138 7590 10/16/2008 Gavrilovich Dodd & Lindsey LLP Joseph R. Baker, APC 8052 Avenida Secreto Carlsbad, CA 92009				
EXAMINER COOK, LISA V				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1641				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
10/16/2008		PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

# Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/706,659

**Applicant(s)**

WITZTUM ET AL.

**Examiner**

LISA V. COOK

**Art Unit**

1641

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 June 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 33-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 33-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **FINAL ACTION**

### ***Amendment Entry***

1. Applicants' response to the Office Action mailed 29 January 2008 (paper filed 6/27/08) is acknowledged. Claims 1-32 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 33-40 have been modified. Currently claims 33-40 are pending and under consideration.

### ***Remarks***

2. Applicant's have directed Examiner Cook to issued claims in parent application number 09/699,131 now US patent #6,716,410. The examiner has reconsidered the issued claims in US patent #6,716,410, however method claims utilizing a composition do not necessarily impart novelty to the composition.
3. Objections and/or rejections of record not reiterated herein have been withdrawn.

## **REJECTIONS MAINTAINED**

*Please note: The instant claims (33-40) are drawn to antibody (protein) configurations, however the structures are defined by nucleotide sequences that encode the proteins. Since a single nucleotide sequence can encode multiple protein sequences the actual structure that Applicant intends to claim is ambiguous.*

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. Claims 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The specification is not enabled for the claimed antibodies because the instant specification is not in compliance with the biological deposit rules.

Claims 33-40 are directed to antibodies having particular binding specificity (like IK17, comprising SEQ ID NO:1/SEQ ID NO:2, binding atherosclerotic plaques, binding OxLDL and binding MDA-LDL). However, the claimed antibodies have not been deposited under the provisions of the Budapest treaty. Furthermore, filling of an affidavit or declaration by Applicant or assignee or a statement by an attorney of record who has authority and control over the conditions of deposit over his or her signature and registration number stating that the deposit has been accepted by an International Depository Authority under the provisions of the Budapest Treaty, that all restrictions upon public access to the deposit will be irrevocably removed upon the grant of a patent on this Application and that the deposit will be replaced if viable samples cannot be dispensed by the depository is required.

Without such a statement, it would be impossible for the skilled artisan to practice the invention of claims 33-40 because other clones made from the source material have no predictable reasonable expectation of success of being identical to the instantly claimed antibodies.

In the absence of any guidance other than to the use of the Mab IK17, one would not know or be able to predict what structure or modifications were important and the amount of experimentation required to determine same would be undue. Note that an enabling disclosure for the preparation and use of only a few analogs of a product does not enable all possible analogs where the characteristics of the analogs are unpredictable.

Accordingly, the art indicates that it would require undue experimentation to formulate and use successful antibodies as recited in the instant invention without the prior demonstration of specific limitations that have not been recited. Amgen Inc. v. Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. (18 USPQ 2d 1027 (CAFC 1991)).

5. Claims 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. This is a written description rejection.

Claims 33-40 are drawn to antibody fragments. The written description in this case does not set forth *any sequence* by which the claimed fragments can be determined, therefore the written description does not reasonably convey the claimed subject matter to one of ordinary skill in the art. Neither the specification nor the claims teach how to define or obtain binding fragments.

There is no guidance as to what the fragments are or how much modification can occur while maintaining product characteristics with respect to the instant invention. There is no guidance as to what fragments can or cannot be utilized for its intended purpose. The specification does not include structural examples of binding fragments, in fact no peptide sequence is included in the disclosure. Thus, the resulting binding fragments could result in any number of complexes not taught and enabled by the specification.

*Vas-Cath Inc. V. Mahurkar*, 19 USPQ2d 1111, clearly states that "applicant must convey with reasonable clarity to those skilled in the art that, as of the filing date sought, he or she was in possession of *the invention*. The invention is, for purposes of the 'written description' inquiry, *whatever is now claimed*." (See page 1117). The specification does not "clearly allow persons of ordinary skill in the art to recognize that [he or she] invented what is claimed." (See *Vas-Cath* at page 1116).

Applicant is reminded that *Vas-Cath* makes clear that the written description provision of 35 USC 112 is severable from its enablement provision (see page 115).

Without a sequence or examples of antibody fragments, the skilled artisan cannot envision the detailed structure of the binding fragments, thus conception is not achieved until reduction to practice has occurred, regardless of the complexity or simplicity of the method of isolation. An adequate description requires more than a mere statement that it is part of the invention and a reference to a potential method of isolating it.

The court indicated that while Applicants are not required to disclose every species encompassed by a genus, the description of a genus is achieved by the recitation of a representative number of molecules falling within the scope of the claimed genus. Therefore the full breadth of the claims, reading on fragments of the claimed antibody does not meet the written description provision of 35 USC 112, first paragraph.

6. Claims 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claims contain subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Enablement requires that the specification teach those in the art to make and use the invention without undue experimentation. Factors to be considered in determining, whether a disclosure would require undue experimentation include 1) the nature of the invention, 2) the state of the prior art, 3) the predictability or lack thereof in the art, 4) the amount of direction or guidance present, 5) the presence or absence of working examples, 6) the quantity of experimentation necessary, 7) the relative skill of those in the art, and 8) the breadth of the claims.

In particular, claims 33-40 are drawn to any antibody having the binding specificity of the IK17 antibody, the antibody is encoded by nucleotide sequences comprising SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2; the antibody is specific for oxidized low density lipoprotein and malondialdehyde low density lipoprotein, and having *in vivo* utility. However, the claimed antibody structures are defined by nucleotide sequences that encode the proteins. Since a single nucleotide sequence can encode multiple protein sequences the actual structure that Applicant intends to claim is ambiguous and has not been identified by the specification.

Further, it is not known how the monoclonal antibody having single binding specificity will bind both oxidized low-density lipoprotein and malondialdehyde low-density lipoprotein simultaneously. The claims and specification fail to provide the identity or structure of this antibody recognition site.

The specification does not provide evidence of a nucleic acid sequence, other than the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 and SEQ ID NO: 2 which are known in the art. From these known sequences primers are produced with the claimed inventive properties; however the specification does not state the identity to a deposited antibody, amino acid sequence, nucleic acid sequence, or any structural characteristics of any other antibody, amino acid sequence, or nucleic acid sequence that has the claimed characteristics.

Moreover, there is evidence that other sequences have not yet been identified therefore; applicants' vague description of an isolated nucleic acid sequence (primers from SEQ ID NO: 1 and SEQ ID NO: 2) has not been adequately described.

In view of the lack of evidence, it is apparent that Applicants were not in possession of the unlimited number of primers which may be produced from the known sequences of SEQ ID NO: 1 and SEQ ID NO: 2, at the time of filing the instant application. It is not clear that Applicant has identified a single antibody protein configuration that meets the claimed limitations.

The skilled artisan cannot envision the detailed structure of the infinite possible antibodies, amino acid sequences, or isolated nucleic acid sequences, thus conception is not achieved until reduction to practice has occurred, regardless of the complexity or simplicity of the method of isolation. An adequate description requires more than a mere statement that it is part of the invention. The nucleic acid structure is required. See *Fiers v. Revel*, 25 USPQ 2d 1601 at 1606 (CAFC 1993) and *Amgen Inc. V. Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Lts.*, 18 USPQ2d 1016.

The antibody activity characteristics and tail domain requirements distinguish the antibody only by what it does, i.e., protein activity, which are purely functional distinctions. Even where there is an actual reduction to practice, which may demonstrate possession of an embodiment of an invention, it does not necessarily describe what the claimed invention is.

The instant specification and claims describe an isolated monoclonal antibody by its protein function, however this description does not describe the claimed antibody itself. See also, *In The Regents of the University of California v. Eli Lilly* (43 USPQ2d 1398-1412), where the court held that a generic statement which defines a genus of a compound/seq.id/etc. by only their functional activity does not provide an adequate written description of the genus.

The court indicated that while Applicants are not required to disclose every species encompassed by a genus, the description of a genus is achieved by the recitation of a representative number of molecules, usually defined by a sequence, falling within the scope of the claimed genus. At section B(1), the court states that "An adequate written description ...'requires a precise definition, such as by structure, formula, chemical name, or physical properties', not a mere wish or plan for obtaining the claimed chemical invention".

Thus a skilled artisan cannot envision all the contemplated recognition sequence sites by the detailed chemical structure of the claimed antibody, therefore conception cannot be achieved until reduction to practice has occurred. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention.

Applicant does not provide guidance for the above noted monoclonal antibodies and provides no guidance as to what modifications or structure are important for the predictable function of the monospecific antibody. Very different structures may be found on antibodies with the same specificity. For example, very different  $V_H$  chains can combine with the same  $V_L$  chain to produce antibody binding sites with nearly the same size, shape, antigen specificity, and affinity. A similar phenomenon can also occur when different  $V_H$  sequences combine with different  $V_L$  sequences to produce antibodies with very similar properties.

These observations indicate that divergent variable region sequences, both in and out of complementarily determining regions, can be folded to form similar binding site contours, which result in similar immunochemical characteristics. Conversely, similar structure may be found on antibodies having different specificities.

In the recent court decision of *Noelle v. Lederman*, 355 F.3d 1343 (Fed. Cir. 2004), claims which recite a genus of antibodies that bound to a mouse antigen were found to be unpatentable, because the corresponding human antigen had not been adequately characterized. This is the same issue currently at hand. The antibody antigen (protein structure) has not been identified in the disclosure.

In addition, the development of non-naturally occurring/synthetic bifunctional molecules (antibody variables – light and heavy chain) with binding characteristics of interest necessitates several conditions which have not been described in the instant specification. In one instance, the prior art discloses that the development of inhibitors which can bind by both an active site specific interaction to a primary binding site and by a structure nonspecific hydrophobic interaction to a second site (bifunctional or bispecific molecules) requires several parameters to produce the intended binding specificity. "Epitope binding of Cu-OxLDL and MDA-LDL".

These parameters include; a crystal structure of the enzyme with the bound primary inhibitor, there must be a relatively "open" active site, to permit access to the active site, and the linker must introduce few unfavorable enthalpic and entropic interactions into the bound state. See Jein et al., J Med Chem., 1994, 37, 2100-2105, especially scheme 1 and page 2103, 2<sup>nd</sup> column 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph.

These parameters have not been addressed by the instant disclosure. Therefore one of skill in the art would not be able to predict the antibody molecules effects *in vivo*.

In other words, the bifunctional molecule must be evaluated in a host in order to determine efficacy or inhibition effects. See Kuduk et al. Bio & Med Chemistry Letters, 10, 2000, 1303-1306, in particular page 1305, 2<sup>nd</sup> column Conclusion, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph.

Further, the art teaches that successful *in vitro* bifunctional construct binding is not always indicative of the *in vivo* results exhibited by that same bifunctional molecule. For example, see Peipp and Valerius page 510 – Conclusion, wherein “Results from clinical trials (in vivo effective dosage) with bispecific antibodies are less encouraging”. Peipp and Valerius, Biochemistry Society Transactions, 2002, Volume 30, part 4, pages 507-511.

Accordingly, the specification does not provide substantive evidence that the claimed bifunctional antibody molecules are capable of binding *in vivo*. This demonstration is required for the skilled artisan to be able to use the claimed bifunctional antibodies molecules for their intended purpose.

Without this demonstration, the skilled artisan would not be able to predict the outcome of the administration of the claimed bifunctional or bispecific non-naturally occurring antibody compositions. The ability to reasonably predict the capacity of a single non -naturally occurring bifunctional molecule to produce protein-protein interaction *in vivo* is problematic.

Unfortunately, the art is replete with instances where even well characterized compositions that induce an *in vitro* response fail to elicit *in vivo* utility. See Waldmann, Science, Vol.252, 21 June 1991, pages 1657-1662, in particular page 1657 – 2<sup>nd</sup> column, wherein antibodies binding therapy has proven elusive and only one monoclonal antibody has been licensed for clinical utility.

Art Unit: 1641

Accordingly, the art indicates that it would require undue experimentation to formulate and use a successful binding composition with out prior demonstration of efficacy.

The instant disclosure has not addressed the issues taught in the prior art as crucial to the discovery of a biopolymer marker.

*The nature of the invention-* the invention is directed to an unidentified antibody composition.

*The state of the prior art-* the prior art of record fails to disclose the particular antibody meeting the claimed limitations.

*The predictability or lack thereof in the art-* there is no predictability based on the instant specification that the antibody and its structure can be readily identified.

*The amount of direction or guidance present-* appropriate guidance is not provided by the specification for the claimed antibodies.

*The presence or absence of working examples-* working examples are not provided in the specification that identify and/or exemplify the claimed antibodies.

*The quantity of experimentation necessary-* it would require undue amount of experimentation for the skilled artisan to make and use the antibodies as claimed.

*The relative skill of those in the art-*the level of skill in the art is high.

*The breadth of the claims-* as recited, the instant claims are directed to antibodies comprising sequences encoded by SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2, but does not teach the actual peptide sequence.

While it is not necessary to show working examples for every possible embodiment, there should be sufficient teachings in the specification that would suggest to the skilled artisan that the breadth of the claimed antibody is enabled. This is not the case in the instant specification.

In view of the teachings of *In re Wands*, 8 USPQ2d 1400, it has been determined that the level of experimentation required to enable the breadth of the claims is undue.

Patent protection is granted in return for an enabling disclosure of an invention, not for vague intimations of general ideas that may not be workable. See *Brenner v. Manson*, 383 U.S. 519, 536, 148 USPQ 689, 696 (1966). While every aspect of a generic claim does not have to be carried out by an inventor, or exemplified in the specification, reasonable detail must be provided in order to enable members of the public to understand and carry out the invention. *Genetech Inc. v. Novo Nordisk A/S* (CAFC) 42 USPQ2d 1001. That requirement has not been met in this specification with respect to the biopolymer consisting of SEQ ID NO:4 diagnostic for Type II diabetes.

Therefore, in view of the insufficient guidance in the specification, extensive experimentation would be required to enable the claims and to practice the invention as claimed.

***Response to Arguments***

Applicant contends that in order to satisfy the deposit, written description, and enablement requirements, the specification must describe the claimed invention in sufficient detail that one skilled in the art can reasonably conclude that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention. Applicant specifically argues that the deposit requirement is only a single means for describing how to make and use the invention and exemplifying possession of the claimed invention. It is Applicant's position that while the deposits of the claimed antibodies are not included in the instant specification, the invention is sufficiently disclosed in the teaching of the IK17 antibody. This argument has been carefully considered but not found persuasive.

The written description requirement for a claimed genus may be satisfied through sufficient description of a representative number of species by actual reduction to practice, reduction to drawings, or by disclosure of relevant, identifying characteristics, i.e., structure or other physical and/or chemical properties, by functional characteristics coupled with a known or disclosed correlation between function and structure, or by a combination of such identifying characteristics, sufficient to show the applicant was in possession of the claimed genus. (See Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 4, pages 1099-1111, Friday January 5, 2001, especially page 1106 3<sup>rd</sup> column). A "representative number of species" means that the species, which are adequately described are representative of the entire genus.

Thus, when there is substantial variation within the genus, one must describe a sufficient variety of species to reflect the variation within the genus. MPEP 2163 II.A.3a.ii. In this instant, adequate support for the genus comprising any and all monoclonal antibodies, fragment antibodies, or single chain fragment antibodies encoded by SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2 is not found in the specification. The disclosure fails to show critical characteristics of the ILK17 antibody that are required for maintaining and or performing the recited characteristics and/or functions recited by the claims. In other words, it is not clear what portions of the encoded sequences are required to perform the characteristics and/or functions. In addition, a deposit of the antibodies is not made nor is the actual sequence amino acid sequence of the intended antibody claimed.

"Adequate written description requires a precise definition, such as by structure, formula, chemical name or physical properties, not a mere wish or plan for obtaining the claimed chemical invention." Reagents of the University of California v. Eli Lilly and Co. 43 USPQ2d, 1398, (Fed. Cir. 1997). The rejections are maintained.

Applicant contends that the test of enablement is whether one reasonably skilled in the art could make or use the invention from the disclosure coupled with the information known in the art without undue experimentation. Examiner agrees, but also notes that the specification must teach how to make and use the invention, not teach how to figure out for oneself how to make and use the invention. In re Gardner, 166 USPQ 138 (CCPA 1970).

Applicant argues that the methods of producing the claimed antibodies are fully disclosed and known in the art (i.e. phage display). Applicant also contends that absent the specific sequence, the binding specificity is taught. This argument was carefully considered but not found persuasive because while the general practice of antibody/protein production may have been routine the particular constructs (monoclonal and fragments) recited by applicant having the required characteristics/functions is not routine and is still deemed undue.

[If mere plausibility were the test for enablement under section 112, applicants could obtain patent rights to "inventions" consisting of little more than respectable guesses as to the likelihood of their success. When one of the guesses later proved true, the "inventor" would be rewarded the spoils instead of the party who demonstrated that the method actually worked. That scenario is not consistent with the statutory requirement that the inventor enable an invention rather than merely proposing an unproved hypothesis. ] See *Rasmusson v. SmithKline Beecham Corp.*, 75 USPQ2d 1297 (CA FC 2005), page 1302 for example.

Therefore claims directed to a genus of monoclonal and/or fragment antibodies having the binding specificity of the IK17 antibody are unpredictable and not taught by the disclosure.

7. For reasons aforementioned, no claims are allowed.

**Remarks**

8. Prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the applicant's disclosure:

A. Selley et al. (WO 94/23302) teach an immunological ELISA assay-employing antibodies to measure oxidatively modified human low-density lipoproteins in plasma samples.

B. Holvoet et al. (Journal of Clinical Investigation, Vol.95., No.6., 1 June 1995, pages 2611-2619) disclose a method for detecting MDA-modified LDL. A monoclonal antibody (mAb-1H11) which to bind with MDA-modified LDL ( $k_a=10^9 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ) and to a much lesser extent with OxLDL (page 2613, column 2, paragraph 1) is described in an immunoassay format.

9. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 1641

10. Papers related to this application may be submitted to Group 1600 by facsimile transmission. The Group 1641 – Central Fax number is (571) 273-8300, which is able to receive transmissions 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. In the event Applicant would like to fax an unofficial communication, the Examiner should be contacted for the appropriate Right Fax number.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lisa V. Cook whose telephone number is (571) 272-0816. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark Shibuya, can be reached on (571) 272-0806.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group TC 1600 whose telephone number is (571) 272-1600.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Art Unit: 1641

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

*Lisa V. Cook*  
*Remsen*  
*(571) 272-0816*  
*10/10/08*

/Lisa V. Cook/  
Examiner, Art Unit 1641

/Mark L. Shibuya, Ph.D./  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1641